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Metro Board Votes to Name Station for After Former CA Senator Alfred Hoyun Song

The Wilshire/Western station, located in the heart of Koreatown, will be named after former California State Senator Alfred Hoyun Song, the first Asian American legislator in the continental United States.

The 13-member Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board voted Thursday to rename the station on a motion sponsored by Metro Board Director and Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mark Ridley -Thomas. In doing so, the county is paying homage to a man of many firsts.

Song was not only California's first Asian-American legislator, he was a World War II veteran who suffered discrimination because of his ancestry. He was a successful advocate against minority voter suppression efforts but also worked to strengthen consumer protection laws and implement court reforms.

"Song's accomplishments continue to inspire Korea Americans, Californians, and Americans throughout the nation," said Chairman Ridley-Thomas. "This station is a source of pride for all of us and will inspire future leaders for decades to come."

Alfred Song was first elected to California's State Assembly in 1962, before serving two terms and winning election to the California Senate in 1966. There he served with distinction, distinguishing himself as chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

According to an oral history conducted by Dr. Raphael J. Sonenshein, executive director of the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs, Song was born in 1919 on a

sugarcane plantation on the island of Oahu, and at the age of six, his family moved to Honolulu. He attended the University of Hawaii, but earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California. He attempted to enlist in the Navy but was denied because of his racial ancestry. He instead became a member of the U.S. Army Air Corps.

"Mr. Song was a remarkable trail blazer," said Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas. "He loved his country and loved California even in the face of rejection and adversity. His drive to serve and faith in America's great potential truly makes him a testament to the American dream."

The Alfred Song station will join the ranks of other transit stations named after pioneers such as former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley at the Civic Center and the Congressman Julian Dixon station at 7th street Metro Center in downtown Los Angeles.

"It is our hope that young people, high school and college students, will learn of Alfred Song's achievements and see public service as a worthy calling," said Leslie Song Winner, Alfred Song's daughter.

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